

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 2417

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, MX, BR

SUBJECT: MEXICAN REACTION TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LA TRIP

REF: MEXICO 2374

1. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED DAILY EL NACIONAL EDITORIALIZED ON FEB 24 CONCERNING THE U.S.-BRAZIL AGREEMENT SIGNED DURING KISSINGER'S VISIT. HEADED "KISSINGER DOES A FEEBLE FAVOR FOR BRAZIL", THE EDITORIAL AGREES WITH EDITORIAL OPINION IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE U.S.-BRAZIL ACCORD "WILL NOT EXACTLY BE CONDUCIVE TO LATIN AMERICAN HARMONY." NACIONAL HASTENS TO DISCLAIM ANY SENTIMENT OF SPITE OR ENVY-- "NOTHING WOULD BE MORE PLEASING TO US THAN THAT OUR SISTER REPUBLIC ACHIEVE LIFESTYLES WHICH ARE MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE FOR HUMAN FULFILLMENT." THE EDITORIAL THEN SOMEWHAT PIOUSLY CALLS FOR A CATEGORIZATION OF "GREAT POWERS" BASED ON THE LEVEL OF "MORAL PERFECTION" A GIVEN COUNTRY MAY HAVE REACHED.

2. A MORE ANALYTICAL APPROACH (HOWEVER MISTAKEN ITS PREMISES) IS TAKEN IN THE FEB 24 ARTICLE BY CESAR SEPULVEDA, HEAD OF MEXICO'S FOREIGN SERVICE SCHOOL AND ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED INTERNATIONALISTS IN MEXICO'S JOURNALISTIC WORLD AS WELL AS AN IMPORTANT FOREIGN SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL. CHARACTERIZING SECRETARY KISSINGER AS "THAT GREAT MASTER OF

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UNUSUAL DIPLOMACY", SEPULVEDA AVERS THAT THE SECRETARY "HAS

SUCCEEDED ONCE MORE" IN CONFUSING POLITICAL OBSERVERS AND THAT HE HAS "FILLED THE HEMISPHERE WITH PERPLEXITY". HE CONSIDERS THAT THE SECRETARY'S TRIP WAS "INADVISABLE FROM ANY POINT OF VIEW AND WITHOUT ANY APPARENT CENTRAL PURPOSE". SEPULVEDA THEN CONSTRUCTS STRAW MEN AS MOTIVES FOR THE SECRETARY'S TRIP: "TO COUNTERACT THE INCREASING INFLUENCE FROM CUBA, TO MAKE SURE OF (THE AVAILABILITY OF) VENEZUELAN OIL." NOW, SEPULVEDA SAYS, WE CAN SEE THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S TRIP HAD USEFUL AND SUBTLE OBJECTIVES ON BEHALF OF U.S. INTERESTS AND "WITH ONE BLOW HE HAS ACHIEVED MANIFOLD RESULTS WHICH DO NOT BENEFIT THE HERMISPHERIC CAUSE." THE SECRETARY WENT TO VENEZUELA, FOR EXAMPLE, TO "WARN" THE PEREZ GOVERNMENT ABOUT SELA. HE WENT TO PERU TO WARN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AGAINST FRIENDSHIP WITH CUBA. HE WENT TO BRAZIL TO ANNOUNCE THE U.S.-BRAZIL AGREEMENT WHICH WILL "ERODE THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY IN THE AMERICAN CONCERT AND WEAKEN. . . INTER-AMERICAN SOLIDARITY. THE TREATMENT EXTENDED TO BRAZIL DURING THE KISSINGER VISIT CONSTITUTES AN ASSERTION THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IS HOPELESS AS FAR AS THE U.S. IS CONCERNED". SEPULVEDA GOES ON AT SOME LENGTH TO ARGUE THAT THE SECRETARY'S TRIP AND PARTICULARLY HIS ACTIONS IN BRAZIL AMOUNT TO AN EXPRESSION OF IMPATIENCE OR INDIFFERENCE TOWARD MULTILATERALISM AND AN EMPHASIS, IN U.S. POLICY, ON BILATERALISM. THE SECRETARY'S DIPLOMACY, ACCORDING TO SEPULVEDA, IS "DIVISIVE".

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL PUBLIC COMMENT THUS FAR ON THE SECRETARY'S TRIP OR THE BRAZILIAN ISSUE. IN PRIVATE, HOWEVER, MEXICAN OFFICIALS SEEM BASICALLY TO AGREE WITH SEPULVEDA'S ANALYSIS AND TO DEMONSTRATE A DEGREE OF RESENTMENT AS DISCUSSED IN REFTEL. A HIGH-RANKING MEXICAN MILITARY OFFICER MERELY COMMENTED SARCASTICALLY: "SO YOU HAVE FINALLY RECOGNIZED THAT BRAZIL IS A GREAT POWER." A MORE SERIOUS VIEW WAS EXPRESSED BY GOM SENATE LEADER ENRIQUE OLIVARES SANTANA. HE SAW VALUE IN THE SECRETARY'S TRIP BECAUSE "DIALOGUE IS ALWAYS USEFUL." WITH RESPECT, HE ADDED, THE U.S. ACTION RELATING TO BRAZIL IS SO SUBJECT TO MISUNDERSTANDING IN LATIN AMERICA THAT IT MAY WELL CAUSE PROBLEMS.

4. OTHER MEXICANS, PARTICULARLY OFFICIALS, WHO HAVE COMMENTED
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ON SECRETARY'S TRIP TO EMBOFFS HAVE AVOIDED ANY MEANINGFUL EVALUATION. SEVERAL HAVE CONCENTRATED ON PUBLIC DISTURBANCES IN THE COUNTRIES VISITED (A SUBJECT WHICH RECEIVED WIDE COVERAGE IN THE MEXICAN PRESS), DISCOUNTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROTESTS BY STUDENTS OR OTHER "INTERESTED SECTORS" AND QUESTIONING THE VERACITY OF PRESS REPORTS.

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